GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3521
ANSWERED ON:07.04.2003
NATIONAL WATER FORUM
S. SAIDUZZAMAN

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the proceedings of two day National Water Forum orgainsed by Navdanya as a culmination of the People's Padyatra at India International Centre recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any action plan has been formulated in the improvement of water sector;

(d) if so. whether the Government propose to encourage the peoples initiatives to overcome future water challenges; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI)

(a) No, Sir. The Ministry of Water Resources have not received the proceedings of the National Water Forum from Navdanya.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The National Water Policy, 2002 has been adopted by the National Water Resources Council under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 1st April, 2002. An Action Plan has been formulated by the Ministry of Water Resources for implementation of this Policy. The Action Plan has been discussed inter-alia with the Non-Governmental and Voluntary Organisations.

(d) & (e) Involvement and participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders has been emphasized right from the project planning stage in the policy as well as Action Plan. Further, participatory approach in water resources management has been focused.

The National Water Policy, 2002 provides that management of the water resources for diverse uses should incorporate a participatory approach, by involving not only the various governmental agencies but also the users and other stakeholders, in an effective and decisive manner, in various aspects of planning, design, development and management of the water resources schemes. Necessary legal and institutional changes should be made at various levels for the purpose, duly ensuring appropriate role for women. Water Users' associations and the local bodies such as municipalities and gram panchayats should particularly be involved in the operation, maintenance and management of water infrastructures/facilities at appropriate levels progressively, with a view to eventually transfer the management of such facilities to the user groups/local bodies. The National Water Policy, 2002 further provides that formation of Water Users' Association with authority and responsibility should be encouraged to facilitate the management including maintenance of irrigation system in a time bound manner.

Also, the year 2003 is being observed as Freshwater Year. The objectives include, inter-alia, increasing awareness among stakeholders regarding scarcity value of freshwater, conservation & efficient use of freshwater and community partnership for informed decision making in meeting future water needs.